

WE CLAIM:

1. An enhanced method of providing telephone directory assistance service comprising the steps:

(a) receiving a customer call;

5 (b) connecting the calling customer to a directory assistance operator;

(c) locating a destination telephone number of a desired party wanted by the customer in a computer database;

10 (d) initiating a telephonic connection between the customer and the destination telephone number responsive to operator selection of the destination telephone number and one of a plurality of connection options, at least one of the connection options  
15 including enabling the following steps (e) - (g);

(e) continuously monitoring said telephonic connection for a predetermined signal issued by the customer;

(f) detecting said predetermined signal; and

20 (g) reconnecting the customer to a directory assistance operator upon said detection of the predetermined signal.

2. The method of claim 1 in which step (d)  
25 comprises sending a digit sequence of the destination telephone number contained in the computer database to a switch host to initiate the telephonic connection.

3. The method of claim 1 in which at least one  
30 of the connection options includes disabling the steps (e) - (g).

4. The method of claim 1 in which step (a)  
comprises receiving a customer call originated with a  
35 cellular telephone.

5. The method of claim 4 which includes one of the operator actions of (a) not providing the number; (b) providing a voiced recitation of the destination telephone number to the customer; and (c) providing the destination telephone number to the customer by a voice recording unit.

6. The method of claim 4 in which at least one of the connection options includes enabling the step of maintaining the directory assistance operator as a conferenced party to the initiated telephonic connection to monitor whether the connection is completed satisfactorily.

7. The method of claim 4 in which at least one of the connection options includes enabling the step of reattempting to establish connection between the customer and the destination telephone party upon request by the customer following detection of the tone.

8. The method of claim 4 which includes repeating steps (c) through (e) for a different desired party following step (g).